

MIDWEST
**Open Air
Museums**

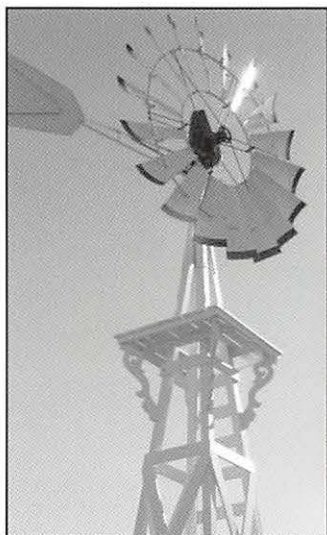
Murder Ballads

Successful Performances

Christmas Music

Dear Old Illinois Review

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November 12-14, 2009

Hosted by

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MIDWEST Open Air Museums

MOMCC MAGAZINE EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief: Dan Schoeneberg
Conner Prairie Interactive History Park

Graphic Design: Terri Joughin Reynolds
Ella Sharp Museum of Art & History

Melinda Carriker
Iowa Living History Farms

Susan Nordmeyer-Gordy
MOMCC Magazine and Website Liaison

Jenny Sherrill
Conner Prairie Interactive History Park

Julie Brown
Dearborn, Michigan

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Unless otherwise directed within a specific feature or column, address magazine correspondence and article submissions to: momccmagazine@gmail.com or:

MOMCC MAGAZINE
c/o Conner Prairie
Attn: Dan Schoeneberg, Editor-in-Chief
13400 Allisonville Rd.
Fishers, Indiana 46038

MEMBERSHIPS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

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About the Cover:

Carte de Visite- circa 1870s- 1880. The back mark reads "Lochman, No. 7 N. Main St., Bethlehem, PA." This unidentified member of a cornet band strikes a proud pose in his band uniform, while holding what appears to be a clarinet. His uniform is trimmed with a wide variety of buttons, epaulettes, and cuff braiding. A watch chain can be seen poking out from under his frock coat. The kepi on his head shows a bright plume, and a badge with what appear to be the initials "B.C.B." which could possibly mean "Bethlehem Cornet Band" given the location of the photographer. Photograph courtesy of Dan Schoeneberg.

President's Perspective

Over the past several months, I have been looking at a lot of different ways to draw visitors in to our site. I have looked at the possibilities of creating podcasts to offering cell phone tours. Both are great ways to appeal to the younger generation who has grown up on technology. Either way we are thinking out of the box and offering something different for the visitor.

In my pursuit for alternate ways to stimulate the visitor's senses, I finally came across an idea that was as plain as the nose on my face, a smell tour! As this idea popped into my head I immediately saw the title of it "Smells of the Farm". At the same time I saw myself standing alone and waiting to see if anyone would show up for the tour. With that, I filed that idea away in my memory and let it sit for future consideration. Two weeks later I was working in our historic kitchen garden when a group of third graders walked up to see what I was working on. I then went on to explain what I had planted and answered questions about the various types of vegetables. While I was answering questions, a little girl timidly asked me about the green leafy bush that was in the corner of the garden. As I started to explain that it was one of our herbs, lemon balm, my memory was flashing a huge sign in front of me saying "smell".

I then proceeded to pick about a dozen leaves and give one to each child. I then had the children crumple up the lemon balm and smell it. The looks on their faces was priceless. The lesser used interpretive tool of smell had done the trick. As the children smelled the lemon balm I then interpreted its various uses. After that, I picked some other leaves like mint, dill and sage. What started out as a simple garden talk had evolved into the same idea that I had two weeks earlier "Smells of the Farm".

After my revelation in the garden I sat down and started thinking of various distinct smells that you would find at a historic site. A wide variety came to mind including hickory smoke from the smokehouse, tobacco from the barn and fresh bread in the kitchen. Thus, my idea was coming together as an organized tour.

The main point that I am making with this whole "smells" tour, is that technology isn't always the answer for something unique. Technology is a good tool to have in our interpretive tool box, but sometimes the basic senses can be our most useful tools. Specialized tours for the visually or hearing impaired can be extremely effective and offer the visitor a real challenge to their sensory skills. Why not make the visitors close their eyes and tell you what they hear in the barn, or identify the



particular smell of their favorite herb? Senses that are usually not stimulated at a site will be put to good use to help tell the entire story.

With this thought in mind, try to look at programming from a different angle in order to add to the overall effectiveness of the interpretation. Think of the lesser used senses and utilize them to your advantage. Who knows? You might come out smelling like a rose.

Take care.

Rick Musselman



THE EDITORIUM

“There is a kinship between music and painting - with the same words used to describe both, as when a musical composition is said to have color and a painting to have rhythm.” Alton S. Tobey, American Artist (1914-2005)

Hello again Dear Readers, and welcome to the latest installment of the MOMCC magazine! I thought that the above quote would serve as an appropriate introduction to this edition of the MOMCC magazine, given several factors that may already be evident to you, our loyal MOMCC members!

Just as music may appear to have color, and painting to have rhythm, one major change you may notice is the new look, color, and “rhythm” of the magazine. After much conversation and thought, the Editorial team, in discussion with the MOMCC Board, decided to investigate the possibility of redesigning the look and feel of the magazine. The last redesign of this publication took place almost seven years ago. In investigating other current museum publications, it was felt that it might be time to make some changes to the face of the magazine, to better reflect the current ideas and potential of the museum field.

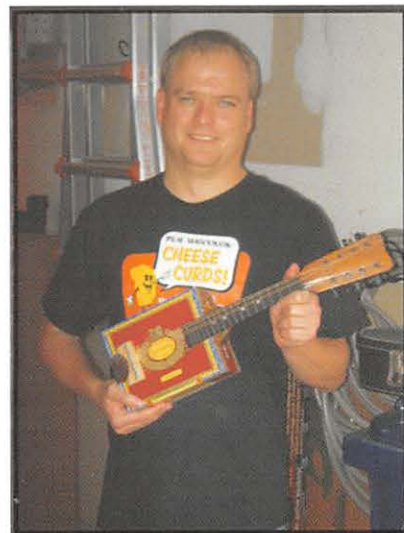
What you hold in your hands is the result of those discussions. It is hoped that this new look, complete with full color pages, will provide a more engaging, and relevant magazine to all of you. As with many other organizations in these economically troubling times, we are trying to find new ways to remain relevant and meaningful. We are all trying to find ways to capture and hold an evolving and savvy audience. This magazine is no exception, and although it may seem coun-

terintuitive to expand at a time when many organizations are cutting back, we felt that to better serve our audience, a new look was appropriate.

We are certainly aware that this redesign delayed getting this benefit to you, and for that we deeply apologize. We appreciate your patience, and certainly hope that you will enjoy the new look and feel of the publication. We have more grand things in store to make this publication even more accessible and meaningful to you, and we are appreciative of your patience, your efforts, and continued dedication to MOMCC, and this publication. Rest assured though, that through these changes we have kept the tone and beat of the magazine the same, with articles and ideas submitted by you, our dedicated and creative membership.

Of course, any undertaking such as this is not a singular effort, it occurs through the movement of many. I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Rick Musselman, Jon Kuester, and the rest of the MOMCC Board for their willingness and enthusiasm to embrace the new changes in the magazine. I'd also like to thank Melinda Carriker, Sue Gordy, Charlie Keller, and Jenny Sherrill, for their assistance and efforts in making this issue flow. It is because of their tireless assistance in editing, proofing, and organizing that it happened.

I would be remiss however, without saying a big thank you to Terri Reynolds who serves as our Graphic De-



signer. It is her impetus of creativity that is behind a great re-think of the layout and design of this magazine. The team had a long row to hoe in the redesign, and it is largely through Terri's efforts and creative thinking, which has resulted in what I think, is a tasteful blend of new creativity, and time honored design. I think you'll enjoy what you see and experience between these pages.

At last, thank you to all of you! As I have said previously, without you, this magazine is nothing. Without your contributions, this magazine would be empty. We encourage you to continue to submit your ideas and articles for consideration in this publication.

Since we are on the subject of thanking, we need to pause for both a farewell and an introduction. Charlie Keller has served as a member of the Editorial team for many years, providing expertise, experience, dedication,

Continued on page 5

MOMCC Annual Meeting Minutes 2008

NOVEMBER 14, 2008

SPRING MILL STATE PARK (MITCHELL, INDIANA)

President Rick Musselman called the 29th annual meeting to order. He thanked all those attending this conference and noted that MOMCC met at Spring Mill in the spring of 1987 and 1988. Those attending these early interpreter conferences were asked to stand. Approximately 20 members were recognized.

Rick thanked the Spring Mill State Park staff and volunteers for hosting this conference. Special thanks were extended to Jill Vance and Michelle Evans for serving as local arrangements and program chairs. Sarah Hagye served as Fall Conference Coordinator.

Secretary Jan Kehr presented the Minutes of the 2007 Annual Meeting held at Augsburg College in Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN. The minutes were published in the MOMCC Magazine Vol. XXIX, issue no. 1, 2008. Printed copies were provided for review. It was moved, seconded and passed that the minutes be approved as published. Motion carried.

Treasurer Deb Reid provided copies of the 2008 Fiscal Report. Financial reports for the fiscal year September 1, 2007 through August 31, 2008 and the budget for the upcoming fiscal year were available for review. It was moved, seconded and passed that these reports be accepted. The reports were approved and filed for audit.

The Candace Tangorra Matelic Endowment Fund is approaching its challenge goal with \$9142 in the fund. As voted by the membership, the interest monies from this fund can be used for keynote speakers and other invited speakers or special publications to benefit the membership.

Reporting on the election, Rick thanked the nominating committee of Jon Kuester, Todd Price, Julie Brown and Rachel Neubaurer for enlisting this year's slate. Rick thanked everyone who agreed to stand for office.

Those newly elected to office are Dawn Bondhus as Secretary, Debra Reid as Treasurer and Betsy Urven as Member at Large. The Board will appoint an Editor in Chief of the Magazine and a Webmaster. Ericka Mason-Osen was appointed Member at Large to fill the position vacated by Dawn Bondhus.

Members leaving the Board are Jan Kehr as Secretary and Rob Burg as Member at Large. On behalf of the membership, Rick thanked these folks for their many years of dedicated service and presented them with certificates of appreciation.

Rick then presented the newly created Past Board Member recognition pin to all past MOMCC board members present at this conference. These recognition pins will continue to be awarded at future conferences.

Resource Chairs were then recognized. Rick encouraged all members to take advantage of these networking groups, both at the conferences and on the MOMCC website message board. Leading these groups are:

Interpretation	Jim Willaert
Leadership	Merrilee Garner Lee
Landscapes & Gardens	Susan Gordy
Artisans	Dave Thomlin
Foodways	Sarah Uthoff
Period Clothing	Ericka Mason Osen & Laura Poresky
Material Culture	Dawn Bondhus
Agriculture	Jon Kuester
Music	Chris Gordy & Melinda Carriker

Rick extended thanks to MOMCC magazine Editor Laura Daugherty and her editorial team. Articles may be submitted via the internet at momccmagazine@gmail.com.

Thanks also were extended to our webmaster Patty Kennedy. MOMCC may be accessed at www.momcc.org.

Reporting for the Candice T Matelic award committee, Dawn Bondhus announced that the winner of this year's award is Barbara Ceiga. Her article 'Putting the Visitor First' was selected as best fulfilling the criteria of the award. Barbara receives a \$200 cash award. See the Magazine for criteria for submitting articles for next year's award.

Speaking for ALHFAM Judith Sheridan reported that the annual ALHFAM conference will be held in Winston-Salem, NC June 4-10, 2009. MOMCC members may attend ALHFAM conferences at the member rate. MOMCC and other regions of ALHFAM sponsor fellowships for members who have attended less than three of these annual

national meetings. See www.ALHFAM.org for more details about this upcoming annual meeting and fellowship applications. MOMCC sponsors one of these fellowships and encourages our members to apply for financial assistance to attend this meeting.

Folks from Greenmead Historical Park enticed us to attend the upcoming 2009 Spring Conference to be held March 19-21 in Livonia, Michigan. Plan to attend '*Perspectives on the Rural Community and Preserving Our Agricultural Heritage*'. Registration packets will be mailed and conference information is also available on the website.

The 2009 Fall Conference and annual meeting hosted by Sauder Village is scheduled for November 12-14 in Archbold, Ohio. Watch the website for the call for papers and future information about this conference. Don't miss '*It Ain't Easy Being Green*'.

President Rick Musselman and Vice President Jon Kuester then introduced two new programs to the membership.

MOMCC is initiating a **Mentor Program** and an **Emergency Outreach Program**.

The mentor program is a one-to-one pairing of mentor-mentee for idea sharing, professional networking and career building. MOMCC members are encouraged to register as mentors or mentees.

The Emergency Outreach Fund is designed to help institutional members that have experienced disasters. Summer flooding of sites in Iowa prompted the MOMCC board to create this fund. Institutions that are members of MOMCC and have suffered recent disasters at their site may apply. Financial aid is available to purchase materials and/or fund a task/work force to help at their site. If you or your site is interested in either program, please consult the website, magazine or MOMCC President for further details.

With no further business on the floor, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Jan Kehr, outgoing Secretary

THE EDITORIUM Continued...

and no end of a dose of good humor in his time on the team. For a variety of reasons, he has asked to step down from his responsibilities. While we understand his need to do so, we will miss his dedicated service to the magazine, and certainly thank him for his years of service. Thank you Charlie!

In that vein, we'd also like to offer an introduction to a new face on the Editorial team. Julie Brown has been a member of MOMCC for many years, and will be assisting us as a part of the team from her home base in Michigan. She brings a varied background, and we look forward to her contributions. Thank you, Julie for being willing to step up, and offer your able assistance. Welcome aboard!

Obviously, looking at the photograph on the front cover, and the references contained in this Editorium, the theme of this issue is music. Within these 40 pages you'll find a "concerto" of Features. First up, you'll find the 2008 Annual Meeting Minutes from the Conference at Spring Mill, Indiana. Next, you'll find an article from Kim Caudell about the history of murder ballads, where she discusses the differences in style and substance between British and American murder ballads. Lastly, you'll find a useful article from Chris Vallillo highlighting the ins and outs, ups and downs, of what to think about in presenting a successful musical performance at your institution. (This may look familiar to you, as it first appeared, in part, as a Keynote Address at the March 2008 Conference hosted by Buckley

Homestead.)

Our Departments for this issue also feature a wide range of "musical arrangements." Not only do we have our President's Perspective in this "fugue" but also from Melinda Carriker there comes a "staccato" chronology of Christmas music, while Phillipa Burgess provides us with an "interlude" of "notations" on preparing a Traveling Troupe for Performances. These come from her experiences in delivering these programs around the Midwest. Also be sure to check out the new "timbre" and feel of *A Moment In Time*. This edition is a brief "libretto" containing photographs of musicians from the 1850s to 1900. Finally, Deb Reid provides us with a "recital" of thoughts on the recent CD *Dear Old Illinois*.

In conclusion, as we end this "symphony" of an Editorium, we certainly hope that you will enjoy the new look and feel of the magazine. This is truly a group effort, and without the team, and most importantly without you, our membership, it couldn't be a reality. If you have additional thoughts on how to make this publication more meaningful and accessible, please do not hesitate to contact me at momccmagazine@gmail.com. If you have ideas, articles, or programs that you'd like to see in print, please consider submitting them to the magazine!

Until next time!
Dan Schoeneberg

Murder Ballads in a Nutshell: Britain vs. America

by Kim Caudell

Murder is at least as old as recorded history; it is the first crime committed in the Bible. Abel's murder at the hands of his brother Cain is echoed in the scores of murder ballads handed down through the centuries. Stories of murder continue to captivate performers and listeners alike in the twenty-first century, as I have seen for myself as a performer during the last several years.

In order to understand the appeal of the murder ballad in particular, it is helpful to explore the general history of balladry. Balladry is an ancient form of storytelling, devised as a way of transmitting tales, and sometimes actual news, to the general population. Ballads are often long and dramatic, playing on a listener's most primitive emotions; their stories may be based in fact, or they may be entirely fictional, complete with fairies, ghosts, and improbable feats of heroism. They are, as Olive Woolley Burt says, "the stuff of which literature is made."¹

Simply defined, a ballad is a song that tells a story, usually from the point of view of a third person. A ballad is a folksong, of course, but a folksong isn't necessarily a ballad. In modern parlance, we generally think of a

Encountering a murder ballad, especially for the first time, is like finding a lost grave in the woods.

— Howard Bahr

folksong in terms of "If I Had a Hammer" or "Blowin' in the Wind," and while these may technically be "folk" songs, they are definitely not ballads. Malcolm Laws defines the distinction thus: "A ballad is a narrative folksong which dramatizes a memorable event"² and is not "primarily a lyric expression of emotion."³ Laws goes on to state, "The method of the balladist is dramatic in that the emphasis is upon action and dialogue rather than exposition. Suspense is created as the narrative approaches its climax, and the audience takes part vicariously in the events recounted."⁴ So a ballad specifically draws the listener in with dramatic action, whereas a generic folksong simply plays on a listener's emotions with no real story (or only an implied story) involved. A murder ballad, then, is a song that tells the story of a murder, either real or imagined, concentrating on the details of the

crime and sometimes the punishment as well.

Pre-nineteenth-century British ballads may or may not be inspired by real events and often contain supernatural elements, such as the murdered person's ghost appearing to a sweetheart to explain his demise. Early versions of "The Two Sisters" include a magical harp, made from the drowned girl's bones, that sings on its own and reveals the older sister as the murderer. "The Gosport Tragedy," one of many variants of the "Pretty Polly" story, even has the murdered woman's ghost returning from the grave to exact revenge upon her killer by ripping him to shreds.

According to Evelyn Kendrick Wells, "It has been said that a ballad's power lies not in what is told, but in what is left untold."⁵ Surely this is one of the most

appealing aspects of the ballad, requiring the listener to use his own imagination about why the events of the tale unfold the way they do. This allusive method of storytelling "puts the listener continually on his mettle, and sometimes baffles him if he lacks some bit of necessary information."⁶

The murder ballad uses this allusive method to its advantage: a good bit of the suspense and tragedy is created by what is left out. Many times we are not told what the killer's motive is and must imagine it ourselves. Suspension of disbelief must often be employed in order to enjoy the full effect of a ballad; asking "Why?" can take power away from the story, like asking a magician to reveal his tricks.

American nineteenth century ballads seem to be based more in facts and usually lack the supernatural elements of older ballads; however, ballad writers of this later period never let the facts get in the way of a good story, and many "factual" murder ballads include fictional elements for dramatic effect. "Omie Wise," one of the best-known native American murder ballads, was inspired by the North Carolina murder of Naomi Wise in 1808. Her suitor, John Lewis (also called John Luther or George Luther in different versions of the ballad), allegedly drowned her in Deep River. Even though Naomi had no sib-

lings, one version of the ballad has her younger brother finding her body in the river.⁷ A young boy whose fishing trip is spoiled by the discovery of a corpse is tragic enough, but the idea that he finds his own sister adds an extra dash of drama.

Murder ballads nearly always involve some degree of pre-meditation on the killer's part. In the story of "Pretty Polly," a ballad still popular in folk and bluegrass circles, Willie takes Polly out into the woods, where she discovers he has already dug her grave. "Bruton Town," a song derived from the "Fourth Day, Fifth Story" in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, tells the story of a young man who is lured into the forest by his lover's two brothers, who plot to kill him because he is of a lower social status than they. Likewise, most versions of "The Two Sisters" involve the elder sister convincing the younger to go for a walk near the water, providing a convenient means to drown her.

Because folk ballads were often transmitted orally, they were subject to many changes along the way due to singers' forgetting words, or perhaps making up new words to reflect local customs, characters, and events, resulting in multiple versions of ballads that became particularly popular. Because of this process, it is often difficult to ascertain exact dates for a ballad's composition: many ballads were

never in print until they had been in oral circulation for some time. Ballads that didn't receive wide circulation may never have made it to print at all and are thus lost to history.

Laws describes the ways in which a ballad was circulated: "It might be published by its author in a magazine or newspaper; it might be sung by its composer but not printed; it might be printed and distributed locally by its composer or by wandering minstrels."⁸ While many ballads were originally sung and not printed, some ballads started out in print and earned a place in tradition because they gained popularity among the people. According to Leach:

A stirring event occurs in a community; it forms the subject matter for a ballad, a ballad which at first is sung locally but which, because of its good story or fetching melody, gradually makes its way from glen to glen, parish to parish, and may in time become national. And such a ballad extends not only in space but also in time; that is, it is sung from generation to generation, often changing by being adapted to new local situations.⁹

Such popularity promoted ballads and facilitated their transmission, regardless of whether they had ever been in print or not. Broad-side ballads, printed on a single sheet of paper with the express purpose of turning a profit, date

at least to the sixteenth century and were the grocery store tabloids of the day. Some were based on true events, others were completely fictional, but nearly all broadsides were sensational in nature. People who could read and had a penny to spare might buy a broadside from a street vendor, while those who were illiterate or without money would simply learn the song by listening to someone else sing it. Once a song began to be transmitted orally, it might outlive its current printing to become a folksong, eventually making its way back into print years later, thanks to folksong collectors. The ballad transmission process is a vicious circle that often drives researchers mad.

British ballads tend to deal with such subjects as class conflicts, noble (and ignoble) deeds by noble men and women, ghostly visitations, outrageous situations, and of course, murder. Leach describes the subjects of such ballads this way:

Ballads are of the stuff that was the general concern of people living in homogeneous, semi-isolated groups: the folk of the glens and of the rural parishes. Ballads were made of the intellectual and emotional stock of lore of such people and were made because such people were interested in this stock of lore. In other words, the ballads are local and realistic in their content, no matter how romantic

they may be in their treatment.¹⁰

If ballads are made of the subjects of concern of the "folk of the glens," as Leach says, why are so many of them about lords, ladies, knights, kings, and queens? Perhaps this is the predecessor of our modern fascination with celebrities: we monitor those of "higher stations" from the pages of tabloids and magazines; our ancestors did the same with their ballads, which allowed them some escape from the drudgeries of everyday life. In this sense, ballads functioned as miniature fairy tales, offering romance and glamour to people who rarely had either.

The ballads of our ancestors do not mince words when it comes to taboo subjects such as sex and death: incest and infidelity are common themes, and descriptions of death are often terrifying. Eighteenth and pre-eighteenth century British murder ballads are some of the goriest in history. These ballads are frank in their depictions of betrayal, incest, infidelity, unwanted pregnancy, and jealousy, and in their descriptions of the murders themselves. The ballad "Lizie Wan" manages to encompass nearly all the abovementioned infractions, most notably incest, pregnancy, and a horrific decapitation. Lizie confesses to her father that her own brother, Geordy, is the father of her baby. When Geordy finds this out, "He

has cutted off Lizie Wan's head / And her fair body in three."¹¹

For sheer tragedy and gore, though, few ballads can compete with the story of Fair Eleanor, also called Ellinor or Ellender, and the Brown Girl. A version titled "Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor" dates back to the 1600s, having been collected by Samuel Pepys.¹² The premise of the story is that Lord Thomas faces a quandary over which bride to choose: Fair Ellinor, whom he truly loves, or the "brown girl," who is wealthy. He asks his mother which he should choose, and she tells him to "bring the brown girl home." In a moment of bad judgment, Lord Thomas invites Ellinor to the wedding, and in a flash of what can only be described as outright stupidity, she accepts. And this is what subsequently happens:

This browne bride had a little penknife,
That was both long and sharp,
And betwixt the short ribs and the long,
Pricked Fair Ellinor to the heart.

'Oh Christ now save thee,'
Lord Thomas he said,
'Methinks thou lookst wondrous wan;
Thou wast usd for to look with as fresh a colour
As ever the sun shin'd on.'

'Oh are thou blind, Lord Thomas?' she sayd,

'Or canst thou not very well
see?
Oh dost thou not see my own
heart's blood
Runs trickling down my
knee?'

Lord Thomas he had a sword
by his side,
As he walked about the hall;

He cut his bride's head from
off her shoulders,
And he threw it against the
wall.

He set the hilt against the
ground,
And the point against his
heart;
There was never three lovers
that ever met
More sooner they did depart.¹³

What could be more tragic than a double murder, complete with decapitation, and a suicide? Lord Thomas's disrespect to his bride's severed head is shocking, but also sad in that it seems to cement the idea that he married her against his own will—he is, after all, avenging the murder of Fair Ellinor, who was his true love. While Pepys's version ends with the verse above, other versions have Lord Thomas asking to be buried with Fair Ellinor in his arms and the brown girl at his feet; thus his true love is next to his heart, and her murderer below them both.

One thing I find strangely amusing about "Lord Thomas and

Fair Ellinor" is Lord Thomas's cluelessness. In all fairness, I have no idea how eighteenth century people interpreted this detail, so this may be strictly a modern observation, but who in his right mind invites his jilted lover to his wedding? This could be interpreted either as a final blow to Ellinor or an attempt to at least be friendly to her, but the fact that Thomas tells Ellinor she looks "wondrous wan" right after she's been stabbed in the ribs reinforces the idea that maybe he isn't very smart. Poor Ellinor actually has to point out that she's been mortally wounded and is bleeding profusely. I do not know if the composer's original intent was to provide a bit of comic relief in the midst of a horrible tragedy, but that is how my twenty-first century mind interprets it. This type of quirkiness is one of the qualities I and other ballad enthusiasts find endearing in tragic ballads.

Superstition and references to the supernatural are also common in the early British ballads, stemming from ancient pagan beliefs in the power of nature and the mystery of death. Talking animals, magical plants, fairies, and other mystical beings are featured in many British ballads; as might be expected, the most common supernatural device seen in murder ballads is the return of the dead person's ghost. However, the ghosts of ballads are not necessarily the translucent manifestations of

energy we modern folk imagine. According to Wells:

The ballad ghost, like the ballad fairy, is corporeal and in general not to be distinguished from a living mortal. He is not an unsubstantial wraith, but a physical dead man, whose spirit may not seek its new home until his mortal affairs are in order. . . . The ghost's return is completely matter-of-fact. There is no evocation of horror or terror, no use of supernatural accessories, and no attempt to explain or prove.¹⁴

The ghost in the ballad, then, is not an object of fear, but rather a messenger to the living, either revealing his murderer to a loved one, or bringing a warning of punishment. Sometimes the ghost appears as a vision in a dream, as in the ballad "Bruton Town," based on Boccaccio's story of Isabetta and Lorenzo in the *Decameron*. The premise of the story is that the farmer's daughter is in love with a servant, and her two brothers, being against the relationship, conspire to murder their sister's sweetheart. They take him out hunting, murder him, and leave him in a shallow grave.

The murdered man appears to his lover in a dream, telling her where to search for his remains; she finds her sweetheart's body where his dream-self has told her. Unlike Isabetta in the "Fourth Day, Fifth Story" from

the *Decameron*, this nameless woman does not take her lover's head back and bury it in a pot of basil. Instead, she pledges herself to him even in death: "One grave shall hold us both together / And along with you in death I'll stay."¹⁵ The ballad ends here, without any punishment for her brothers' crime. The murdered man is a servant, after all, and thus expendable. Not only that, he committed a breach of class etiquette by being presumptuous enough to court the master's daughter, so at least in the brothers' minds, the murder is deserved. By murdering their sister's lover, they also punish her for her perceived impetuosity and disobedience.

British ballads are dramatic, romantic, and often explicit in dealing with unpleasant details. Stories of lords and ladies, fairies and ghosts abound, amid gory tales of murder and unfortunate relationships. Much of this changed as the British ballad migrated to the colonies. While many of the ballads sung in America were of British origin, Americans naturally began their own murder ballad tradition as a new American culture began to emerge following the Revolutionary War. In the nineteenth century, death—whether it was from murder, war, disease, or old age—was a daily fact of life, and the native American ballads reflect this reality. British and American balladry share some common features,

but native American ballads distinguish themselves in several ways. According to Laws:

American ballads are democratic. They fail to recognize class distinctions, and hence they largely ignore the theme of social conflict. Because they show no interest in people of wealth or position, they will never acquire the romantic flavor possessed by stories of royalty and nobility. Pageantry and the supernatural, two important ingredients of romance, have almost no place in our balladry... On the other hand, physical labor, which is rarely mentioned in the traditional balladry of the British Isles is responsible for many of the best known American ballads.¹⁶

Thus, the focus shifted from the pomp and pageantry of British ballads to the working class of the new America. Ballads in America dealt with the common concerns of everyday people rather than the trials and tribulations of the noble class, and references to the supernatural all but disappeared.

Murder has always been a popular subject in the history of balladry, and this did not change in the native American tradition. Unfortunately, murder is a subject that crosses all socioeconomic barriers and captures the attention of all types of people. In this respect, a murder ballad is truly a "folk" song, and it

serves a few clear purposes. It memorializes an event and the people involved, it disseminates news even if the facts are sensationalized, and it entertains.

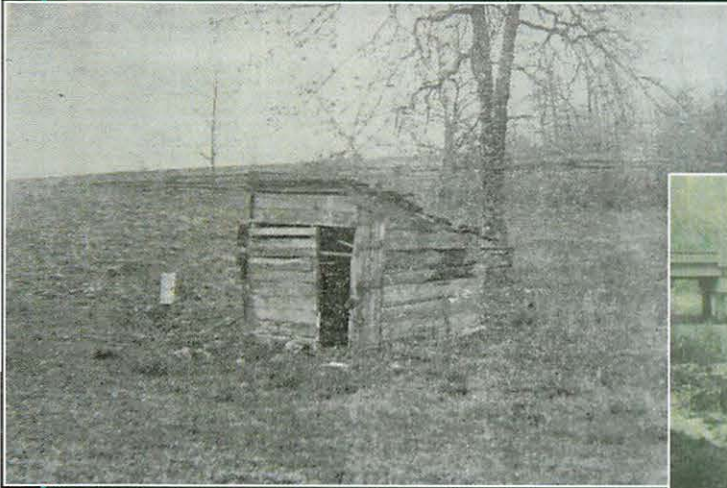
Murder ballads of the nineteenth century are largely based on true events and deal with all kinds of murders, although many of them follow the stereotypical "murdered girl" story, wherein an innocent maid is murdered by her own sweetheart. The traditional ballad "Pretty Polly," also known as "The Jealous Lover," is probably the best example of the murdered girl story formula: an unsuspecting, naïve young woman is lured to the woods or the riverside by her sweetheart, who has usually promised to marry her. Instead, he murders her in spite of her pleas for her life, and in some cases, buries her in a grave he has already dug. Sometimes he gets away with the crime, while other times he is condemned to die for it. In addition, a motive is not always given, thus reinforcing Wells's idea that the power of a ballad often lies in what is left out.

This traditional stereotype often has an effect on the way facts are portrayed in ballads. Anne B. Cohen explains it thus:

Presumably, this plot formula is a "construct" or "archetype" of some kind existing in the minds of those people who write

(Continued on page 12)

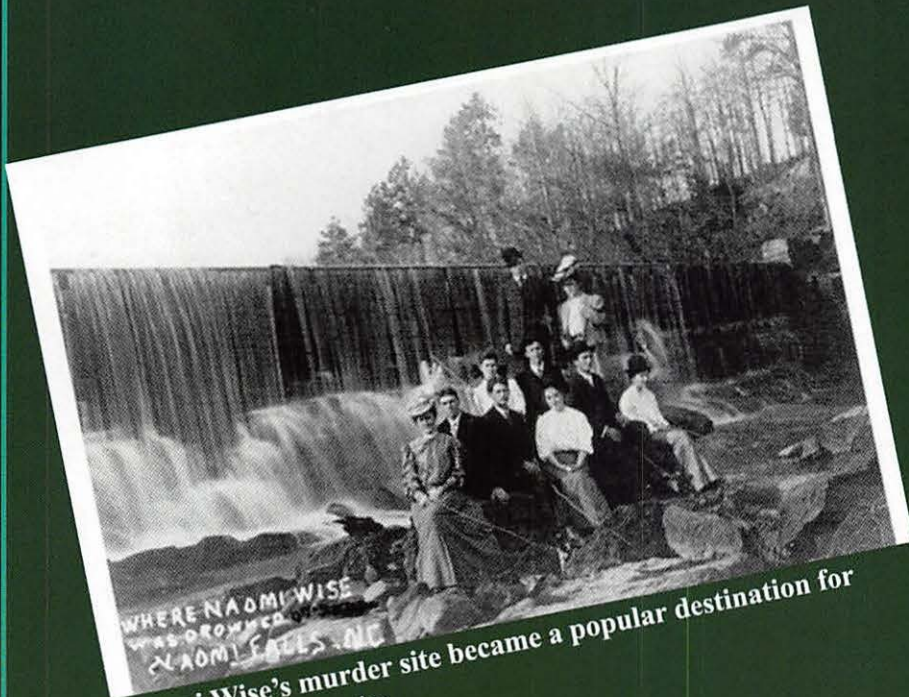
The Real Naomi Wise



A Randolph County newspaper photograph (first half of the 20th century) of the alleged block used by Naomi Wise to mount the horse of Jonathon Lewis [and then ride to her rendezvous and death]. In the photo a piece of paper attached to the stump/block is visible.

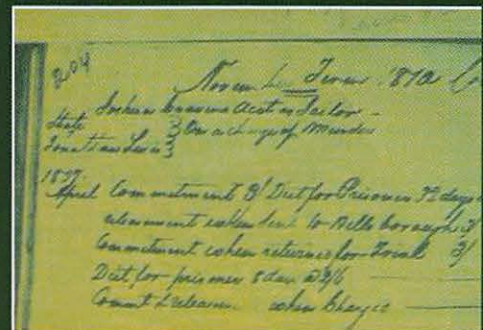


High school drama groups used to stage productions of the Naomi Wise legend near the river in Randleman, N.C. .



Naomi Wise's murder site became a popular destination for late-Victorian picnics.

Naomi Wise is still very much alive-- at least in the local lore and legend of Randolph County, North Carolina. Her story is told in county history blogs, walking tours, and in documents at the Randolph County library. Even a quick search for "Naomi Wise + North Carolina" will yield several sites.



Page from the Superior Court (November 1810) tallying the expense of the judication of Jonathon Lewis.

Images courtesy of the historical photograph collection of the Randolph Room in the Asheboro Public Library

newspaper stories and those people who compose ballads, such that it influences, if not their perceptions of events, at least their framing of these events into narratives. . . . The result of this formulaic filter, through which information passes, is that stories tend to be altered progressively toward greater and greater similarity to the model.¹⁷

So, even though a ballad might be taken from the headlines, it could still be altered to fit the story formula that was already firmly entrenched in a few centuries' worth of ballad tradition. This story manipulation and embellishment worked because the ballad writers and their au-

dience were familiar with the formula and probably even expected it, regardless of the actual facts. Likewise, people tend to believe what they're told and will believe in the truth of a ballad in spite of its being altered by the story filter. According to Laws, "Approximately two out of three native ballads, then, can be shown to have a factual basis, while many others probably sprang from actual events. Under these circumstances it is little wonder that singers have great faith in the truth of ballad stories."¹⁸

One of the best known true American murder ballads comes from the story of Naomi Wise, presumably murdered by her suitor John Lewis in North Carolina in 1808. Lewis was accused of drowning Naomi in Deep River; he escaped from jail but was recaptured, tried, and acquitted.¹⁹ Nonetheless, several versions of the "Poor Omie" murder ballad have Lewis confessing to the crime and being condemned to die. In many instances, ballads about the death of Naomi Wise closely follow the story of "Pretty Polly." In both ballads, the young woman is led away by someone she trusts. The killer then proclaims his murderous intent, and the victim pleads for her life, to no avail—yet one of these ballads is based on a true event. This example reinforces Cohen's theory that true stories may be retold so that they follow the standard formula more

closely than the actual facts. The formula, after all, is comforting in its familiarity, while the facts may be disturbing.

Not all American murder ballads involving women bow to the murdered girl stereotype, as illustrated by the story of Frankie Silver (or Silvers, as she is sometimes known), the first woman to be executed for murder in North Carolina. In 1832, Frankie was tried and convicted of hacking her husband Charlie to pieces and burning his remains in the fireplace. The best-known ballad that has survived is purported to have been written by Frankie herself and recited as a gallows confession. There is no documentable proof of this,²⁰ but it is a sensational device that undoubtedly allowed the ballad printers of the time to make a profit. Beyond the ballad, there really isn't much we know about Frankie, but the story of her nefarious deed has survived for almost two centuries. It even inspired a novel by Sharyn McCrumb, titled *The Ballad of Frankie Silver*.

American balladists carried on the traditions of their British predecessors, making subtle changes in form and content that reflected the new society in which native American ballads were composed and sung. The murder ballad did not become extinct with time; rather, it adapted and thus has been able to survive. Contemporary mur-

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der ballads are different from their centuries-old forbears in length and form, and the stories may not always follow the traditional formula, but tales of tragedy are still popular in modern folk culture. Once in awhile, a murder ballad will spill into the mainstream—such as “Goodbye Earl” by the Dixie Chicks—captivating listeners who might not otherwise be exposed to this form of storytelling. Additionally, contemporary murder ballads should not be ignored as a source of literature and poetry. Writers such as Bob Dylan (“The Ballad of Hollis Brown”), Lyle Lovett (“The Lights of L.A. County”), and Bruce Springsteen (“Nebraska”) have composed murder ballads as tragic and poetic as those we now consider part of the traditional canon, but because these artists are considered popular singers, their work is often overlooked by serious scholars. In my estimation, this is a mistake. Contemporary writers are merely following a long-standing tradition, and there is much to be gained from examining these modern murder ballads. After all, they are a reflection of the times in which we live.

ENDNOTES

1. Olive Woolley Burt, *American Murder Ballads and Their Stories* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964), xi.

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4. Ibid., 3.
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9. MacEdward Leach, *The Ballad Book* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1955), 15.
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13. Ibid., 187.
14. Wells, *The Ballad Tree*, 142.
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17. Anne B. Cohen, *Poor Pearl, Poor Girl* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), 5.
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19. Ibid., 193.
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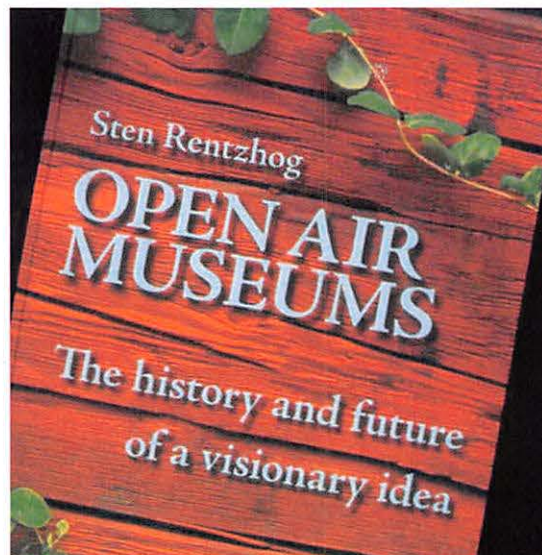
Wells, Evelyn Kendrick. *The Ballad Tree*. New York: Ronald Press Company, 1950.

Kim Caudell and her husband Paul have been involved in living history since 1995. Since that time, they have performed musical programs at various 18th and 19th century historic sites in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Virginia, and Illinois. Kim earned her Master's Degree in English from Belmont University in 2008 and wrote her thesis on murder ballads, a subject she continues to research. Readers can reach her at fiddlebum1833@aol.com .

Open Air Museums

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Sten Rentzhog



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-- Edward L. Hawes, museum consultant

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How to Present a Successful Performance

By Chris Vallillo

Many museums are finding live performances and historic interpretations to be an effective, accessible, new way to tell their story and attract new audiences. For those of you that are new to this situation, it can be an intimidating task to try to produce your first event. As a performer and presenter for over 30 years, I've tried to put together some thoughts that might help you through this process.

Most MOMCC sites will be working with less-than-ideal performance spaces, but being aware of several factors will help the sites make the most of what they have. After all, music has been performed in situations like these for generations—in all likelihood, music from the period you are presenting, and certainly the very music we are showcasing in New Harmonies.

Of course, this is a great opportunity to build partnerships. It may be possible to partner (or cooperate) with small venues, theaters, opera houses, and other historic meeting houses (very exciting and authentic places to present roots music) to act as performance venues. The best of these may have sound and lights. It may be possible to trade out use of the facility or get a reduced rate for a sponsor credit. This can be a very successful way to go.

However, many museums will want or need to stay on site and will end up

using non-performance spaces for their events. A lot of subtle things either add to or detract from a presentation; here are some simple things you can do to enhance a performance in any space you use.

1) Put performers in an appropriate space and give them room to work. When I perform as a soloist, I ask for a minimum “stage” area of 8 ft by 10 ft. A band will need significantly more, depending on instrumentation, but figure at least 10 by 20, and that’s probably underestimating. This is information you’ll want to know about an artist well before the performance. You’ll do that with a stage plot, which I’ll address later. Acts don’t need to perform on a fixed stage or risers, but they do make things look more professional and enhance visibility for your audience.

2) Make the act the featured attraction. Even if you don’t have a stage, make the performers the focus. Have a clear line of sight to the stage and make the stage the point of focus in the room. Add some simple touches to make it look good. Hanging a banner behind the act is an effective way to spice up the area; a small rug where the performer stands can warm up a space.

3) Seating: Plenty of comfortable seating is very important. Arrange the chairs or benches to focus on the stage. Leave adequate room for folks to get in and out.



Chris Vallillo and Bucky Halker opening the Smithsonian Institution’s New Harmonies exhibit in Galena, Illinois.

4) Lighting can help draw attention to the stage. It doesn’t need to be stage lighting. Something as simple as a couple of old floor lamps at either end of the stage can provide extra light, set the mood, and draw the eye toward the stage. Regardless of how fancy or simple you make it, be sure to have general lighting on the stage area in such a way that the performer is easily and clearly seen.

5) Sound: In rare cases, you will be able to present artists with no sound re-enforcement (no PA). While this works in some instances, more often than not you’ll need a PA in order to get the most out of a performance, particularly with older audiences. I’ll talk about that in depth below.

6) Always use a short prepared introduction with a sentence or two of background about the performer(s), and appropriate credits for sponsors, etc. Don’t rattle off a whole bunch of announce-

ments here; keep it short and to the point; a maximum of two to three minutes. Save your extended “Thank You’s” for after the show. Let the audience know the performance length and what to expect. Some common performance lengths are a single set of 45 minutes to an hour (the longest you’ll want to go without a break) or two 45 minute sets with a break in between for refreshment and CD sales (think fund raising *and friend raising*).

7) Have access to bathrooms! It seems like a no-brainer, but you’d be surprised.

8) Promote the event with press releases to newspapers, radio, and TV timed so they arrive 10 days to two weeks ahead of the event. Always include a picture! Most papers prefer email and high resolution j-pegs these days, although some small papers may still take hard copies. Many performers have web sites that have downloadable j-pegs and press information. Get copies of

what you need when you book the act and keep it on file rather than waiting until the last minute!

9) Booking the acts: What to pay? That's a tough one! First of all, if you want a professional, historically accurate performance, you'll need to hire professionals. Treat your performances with the same consideration you give your exhibits and be prepared to invest accordingly. \$250 to \$500 for a professional soloist is reasonable, but expect to pay more for very recognizable acts. For bands, budget at least \$400 to \$800 as a low-end number, and on up from there. Soloists will make more per person than band members, and that's appropriate. Negotiating with an artist can be confusing. You can begin by giving them a rundown of the event (date and time, location, length of the set or sets, and target audience), then ask for a price. Remember "asking price" is just that. We all negotiate. If an artists' asking price is outside of your budget say so. Use those exact words. Have a ceil-

ing price in hand when you talk so you don't have to go back and seek committee approval. Then, if you think it's appropriate, offer the best price you reasonably can and see what happens. There's no shame in asking if they will consider performing for less than their asking price; just don't be offended if they don't take it.

10) Details! Get them in writing and be explicit! This will save you many headaches down the road. Use a simple contract or letter of agreement that lists all contact information: time, date, location, length of performance; who, if anyone, is providing sound; and any special requirements or unusual details. Spell everything out clearly and simply. Send copies to your performers with a simple cover letter asking that they sign and return one of them (otherwise they may end up in a drawer unopened and unread). It never hurts to include a self-addressed envelope they can use to return the contract to you, along with a set of MapQuest di-

rections to the venue. In some cases, sites may be presenting folks that are not full-time professional performers, so it will pay to be clear. I'll include a sample contract at the end. Feel free to use, modify or ignore as you see fit.

11) You'll need to know technical information about the artist(s) to make things go smoothly. For example, how many performers will be on stage, and what kind and number of instruments will they be playing? How much space will they need to set up, and what will they need for sound (microphones, stage monitors, speakers, mixing boards, how many outlets)? Who will provide sound? Many professional artists have a stage plot they can send you that will show the layout of performers on stage and list the various instruments and microphones needed. If not, send them a simple blank stage plot and have them fill it out and return it with the contract. Be aware of electrical needs. Sound equipment isn't too extreme on electrical use, but lighting is! If an act is bringing lights, be sure you have enough power and have extra fuses on hand if your facility still uses them. Make sure you have **GROUND**ED electricity.

12) It's a safe bet that an act will need at least 30-45 minutes to set up. As a soloist, I ask for a full hour, and that can still be tight if I'm providing sound. If at all possible, have the performers set up and do a sound check before the audience arrives. A sound check simply means they will run through a couple numbers and set the sound levels. This is always much better than winging it and trying to get



A good improvised stage set up.

things right during the show. If you are going to put on a more complicated act, plan on extra set up and sound check time! A full-blown band with PA could easily take 1½ to 2 hours.

13) In most cases, you'll need to have a sound system in order to present music. The focus of *New Harmonies* is music. It's critical that music be heard clearly and comfortably in a performance. Don't scrimp here! Your event will be more successful, your audience response will be stronger, and your artists can give you better performances when the sound is right. Do not try to present a musical act with a wireless clip-on mic or podium-style mic and speaker. These may work fine for a lecturer, but will not do for music! Sound systems vary a lot, but the good news is that in this day and age, there are many outstanding systems that are relatively inexpensive. Your first option is to have the act provide the sound system. Be sure to address this issue when you book the act. Most professional musicians and many amateurs have their own sound systems, and if you don't have access to one or have no experience with one, this may be the way to go. If you plan to go that route, ask about that right off the bat and negotiate it into the performance price. Write it into your agreement.

If you are using an act that doesn't have sound but needs it, there are several ways to go. One is to use a venue that has sound in it. Some venues such as clubs and small theaters have sound in place and people to run it. See if they will donate the space or rent it at a reduced



Artists product table.

rate as an in-kind contribution in exchange for being listed as a sponsor. This is a perfect example of using the Smithsonian name to build new relationships! It is also possible to hire a sound company to run sound for your event. Prices and quality vary. Expect to pay at least \$150 on up. Frequently you can rent a small system from a local music store. For many small museums this will be the most cost effective way to go. Again, rates vary (\$75 to \$200 and on up is common), but this might be an opportunity for a promotional trade-out with the music store. Consider asking them to provide sound and be listed as a sponsor. Be sure to send them posters for the display!

A few of you may want to purchase a small system to have permanently at your facility. Good systems are available for between \$1,000 and \$1,500. One choice is to talk to a local music store (again, ask for a sponsorship/discount or use this as a chance to build an ongoing relationship with the store). They

may be able to give you a good deal, but in most cases, selection and tech support will be limited. Being a rural artist myself, I prefer to work with one of the many mail order/internet stores that can offer wider choices and lower prices. There are many to choose from, and most will give you 15-20% discount off list price.

Two of the larger ones, Sweetwater and Full Compass, have excellent service and great prices. I primarily use Sweetwater because they have great technical support people that can help you get things set up and running easily (a big plus if you are new to any of this) and being in Indiana, shipping to Illinois is very quick. All these mail order stores have web sites these days as well. I've included a list at the end with contact information. I've put together an example of what should be a very respectable sound system, easy to use, solid and good sound quality that should do nicely for most small situations. It prices out with shipping at just under \$1400.

This can be a good reference for what you'd need to do anything from a soloist up to a small acoustic group in an indoor venue. You can also use this as a planning guide if you intend to rent sound.

14) Performer amenities: You'll want to have a secure place for the musicians to put cases, coats, and other personal items. If at all possible, the space should be able to serve as a dressing room or green room where they can warm up before the show. It doesn't have to be special -- a spare room or office is fine. Finally, provide a desk or table where the performers(s) can sell compact discs after the show. You will find that most acts will bring their recordings along, and these sales not only provide significant income for them, they will give your audience an opportunity to take something home to remember your show! Be sure to use this space to put out brochures, flyers, etc. about your site and other MOMCC activities.

15) Serving refreshments after the event will help create an atmosphere where audience members stay and visit with the artists, view the exhibit, and get to know your site. Use this to your advantage to snare new volunteers and to increase the overall awareness of your facility. This is where great new partnerships can begin.

I hope this gives you some insight into the process of presenting a successful performance. It can be a great way to help tell your museum's story as well as attract a

new audience and a positive way to keep your museum's name in print and on people's lips.

MOMCC MUSICAL EQUIPMENT RESOURCES

National Mail Order Music Chains

Sweetwater Music

1-800-222-4700

<http://www.sweetwater.com/>

Full Compass

<http://www.fullcompass.com/>

800-356-5844

800-476-9886

Sam Ash

www.samash.com

800-472-6274

MOMCC PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT SAMPLE

This agreement is made between:
(MOMCC site) _____

(Artist) _____ and _____

for a musical performance on (date) _____ at (time) _____.

Performance location and address: _____

Set-up time: _____

Beginning time: _____

Number of performers: _____

Ending Time: _____

Performance Fee: _____

Program description: (Number and lengths of sets. Details such as who is providing sound, any special requirements etc. For example: *Show will consist of two 45 minute sets with a 20 minute break. Artist will provide the sound.*) _____

Attach stage plot with basic set-up details and any technical requirements. _____

CONTACT INFO:

MOMCC Site Representative:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Web site: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Artist Representative:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Web site: _____

A printable version of this document is available on the MOMCC website Message Board (www.momcc.org).

Guitar Center

<http://www.guitarcenter.com/>

Found in many major metro areas (Greater Chicago, Peoria, Rockford and Joliet) Full line of PA gear, but in-store help is weak and largely geared towards rock.

Musician's Friend

<http://www.musiciansfriend.com>. This is the web version of Guitar Center, same prices and selection.

MOMCC SOUND SYSTEM

EXAMPLE

A sample system from Sweetwater prices at \$1391.54 with shipping. This is a good-quality, budget setup.

This sound system consists of a pair of Tapco 15-inch powered speakers, 2 speaker stands, a Yamaha 12-channel

mixer, 4 Shure PG 48 dynamic microphones, 4 boom mic stands, and all the necessary cables to put on a show right out of the box.

You can beat this price with a lesser system, but you'll sacrifice sound quality. You can upgrade to Shure SM58 mics (about \$100 each) for better sound. Use this as a reference for a basic setup that would do well for anything from a soloist up to a small bluegrass-style band (although you might need more mics for the band). Also this is a good "checklist" of what you'll need if you rent sound.

If, by any chance, you want this exact set-up, call Sweetwater, give them the Quote ID # 1483172 and the exact system is listed in their computer along with this quote. Ask for Arend

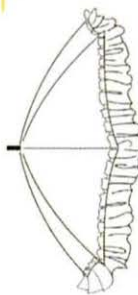
Raby at extension 1276 and use my name.

.....

Chris Vallillo is a professional roots-based singer/songwriter and folklorist from West Central Illinois. His most recent project, a one-man show and CD Abraham Lincoln in Song, on the music of Abraham Lincoln's life has been endorsed by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. He is currently the Illinois State Scholar for the Smithsonian Institution's touring exhibit on roots music, New Harmonies. www.chrisvallillo.com. He can be contacted at vallillo@macomb.com.

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Sing a Song of Christmas

By Melinda Carriker

When we think of Christmas one of the first things that probably comes to mind is music. What would Christmas be without “Silent Night,” “Jingle Bells,” “Frosty the Snowman,” or “White Christmas”? Many living history museums have some sort of Christmas/holiday event that takes place. One way to add to the festivities is to incorporate music. That is the easy part of the decision. The hard part is figuring out what songs are appropriate for your site. The following information will give you a good starting point now so that you can enjoy the sounds of Christmas in December.

The following is a list of some common, and not so common, Christmas songs and the year or era they came about. One of the fun things about doing these songs from the correct era is that over time some have changed a bit. Take “Jingle Bells” for instance – it began life as “One Horse Open Sleigh.”

Early Centuries- 14th, 15th, 16th
Many songs go back centuries when it comes to music. Some songs are considered “traditional” to a country; others have been translated into English at a later date.

1300s *Good Christian Men, Rejoice*, originally in German

1400s *I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In*

1420 *Gaudete*

1400s (late) *Noel Nouvelet (Christmas Comes Anew)*, traditional French

1500s *Dona Nobis Pacem*
On This Day Earth Shall Ring

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

What Child is This

1553 *Bring a Torch Jeannette Isabella*, English translation

late 1800s

1588 *Ding Dong! Merrily On High*

1591 *Coventry Carol*

17th Century

1500-1600s *Deck the Hall*, English translation in 1881

1600s *Here We Come A-Wassailing The First Noel Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*, in German

1684 *Sussex Carol*, traditional English

18th Century

1700s *God Rest You Merry Gentlemen*

1719 *Joy to the World*

1743 *Adeste Fideles (O Come, All Ye Faithful)*, English translation **1841**

1753 *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*

1794 *Auld Lang Syne*, English translation **1800s**

19th Century

1800s (translation) *Sans Day Carol*, traditional Cornish

1818 *Stille Nacht, or Silent Night*, English translation **1863**

1819 *Still, Still, Still*, traditional Austrian

1821 *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

1831 *Brightest and Best, or Star in the East*

1847 *O Holy Night*

1849 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

1851 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

1854 *Good King Wenceslas*

1855 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

1857 *One Horse Open Sleigh* (now *Jingle Bells*)

1857 *We Three Kings*

1859 *Jeg Er Saa Glad (I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve)*, in Norwegian

Sheet music covers 1874-1880



show that there were mountebanks at the time, so our performance will be based upon this form of entertainment, rather than the more elaborate entertainment packages that came later.

Another example is our performances of *The Beggar's Opera*, which we have done for two years at St. Charles, Missouri. The time period of this event was to be about the same time as the Louis and Clark expedition. In considering possible entertainment forms, we thought about several. We rejected the mountebank idea as the host had hired a larger ensemble than was appropriate for that form. Tableaux were another possibility, but we rejected a selection of readings and retellings of the Louis and Clark expedition as telling such stories would occur after the event, not just before or during. A tableau of *Hiawatha* was also rejected as the Longfellow poem was written too late for the period.

We then looked at what plays were being performed in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We were looking for a play or bal-

lad opera that had some staying power (so we could use it at other events) with a plot line that was not too arcane, and that we could fit into the time restraints of the contract. Ultimately we found *The Beggar's Opera*, written in 1729 as a spoof on the serious Italian operas that Handel was then producing in England. This work had remained popular in both England and (more importantly) America until the 1880s.

Our first concern was the title. It was not an opera in the sense that it was sung throughout, but consisted of a series of popular tunes interspersed with the dialogue—similar to a modern musical-comedy. We knew that the audience would likely not understand the distinction, so we set up posters with descriptions of the work emphasizing the plot of the “life and trials of a highwayman” rather than actual title (although we used the title and the author in the advertisement as well).

Another problem with this work was its length. It was over two hours long, so we had to make serious cuts. We kept the Beggar character, not

only to introduce the work (as in the original) but also to tie together the scenes that we kept. We delighted in having several of our actors playing multiple roles in the work, as this was a common feature in small tour-

ing acting troupes. The original work consisted of about 70 tunes that were popular in 1729, too much for a general modern audience. However, some of these melodies are still known today, and we selected scenes based upon how well the tune is known today, as well as for plot and dramatic considerations. Interestingly, even though the tune is known, the meaning of the text was very different. My personal favorite tune is now known as “Golden Slumbers” but in the *Beggar's Opera* it is used by Mrs. Peachum to instruct her daughter on how to flirt with men but not to be so disreputable as to marry one of them. “Greensleeves” in *The Beggar's Opera* is used by the “hero” to bemoan the injustices and hypocrisies of the English penal code. *(As a side note to historical performances, the melody used here is not exactly the same one as we hear today; further research has shown that this is an earlier version of the tune and should be used when doing earlier musical performances. This also serves as a reminder that just because the title of a tune is the same, it does not mean that the melody is the same.)*

Having selected the type of performance, we then look at the instruments and music. In the case of *The Beggar's Opera*, the music was dictated by the work itself, but the instruments we normally played with, the banjo, cornet, harmonium, and so forth, were not invented by the time period of the event. We therefore used the harpsichord and recorders, still in use at the time we were portraying.

For performances based in the mid-nineteenth century and beyond, we use instruments that in many cases are still in use in a recognizable form. However, it is best not to be



fooled by familiarity. For example, banjos of today are not played in the same manner as banjos in the 1840s and 1850s. To get as close as possible to the earlier playing style, it is necessary to refer to five or six banjo instructors that were printed at that time, as well as refer to other sources, such as how the banjo is represented in works written for other instruments (Louis Gottschalk's "The Banjo" comes to mind, along with other compositions written to idiomatically represent the banjo on a piano), pictorial representations of banjo players, and written descriptions of the playing style.

The guitar is another one of those instruments that usually requires the performer to rethink his or her playing style. For 1850s and 1860s events, we sometime use a particular guitarist/singer. Research has shown that his usual style of playing the guitar (the thumb pluck and strummed chord or "folk style") is not documentable to the period, so he has used manuals along with recordings of the sound that study of the manuals produces to lead him toward a more appropriate performance style. As an added bonus, his guitar playing is now more in balance with the banjo players. (The old adage of "a period solution to a period problem" comes to mind.) Other instruments can make easy transitions from modern to period. In the case of the flute, the single-keyed wooden flute was still somewhat in use until the mid-nineteenth century and is very similar to the modern "Irish" flute, the main difference lying in the size of the hole: the Irish

flute has larger holes so that the performer can bend the note. Of course, the most fashionable flute players could use a closed-hole Boehm system such as is used today, as this system was just coming into regular usage by the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

The violin, like the flute, predominantly played melody and can be easily adapted for use without many changes to playing style. The main differences between the modern violin and the

nineteenth century version lie in the need to remove the chin rest, shoulder rest, and fine tuners, and replace the bottom three metal strings with gut, although the gradual replacement of all the strings with metal and metal wound strings occurs progressively throughout the century.

The next step in creating a performance is to find music that suits the venue. Finding appropriate music is fun and also eye-opening. We have already mentioned the "Greensleeves" find, but we also don't find things that we thought we might. Such is the case with an 1880s-90s Medicine Show we are working. As the "medicine" we are selling is an Indian remedy, we searched out music in what we thought was an Indian idiom, but we couldn't find any. There were lots of examples of so-called Indian maiden-cum-lullaby-cum-schottisches and war chants as sung by the "real Indians," but they were in the same musical idiom as sentimental parlor songs. Even the song appar-

ently sung at the Kickapoo Medicine Show was clearly of 1880s European descent in the "Grandfather's Clock" style. It thus becomes clear to us that, whatever the Europeans may or may not have been hearing about Native American musical style, it certainly was not reflected in the parlor music of the time. *(This then leads to other trains of thought, such as "How African was the music that the black-face minstrels played and purported to have learned from the black slaves?" As you can see, in this area of research as in others, work in one area leads to questions in others!)*

Other considerations also come in the selection of music and the text of the song. Certain songs from the black-face minstrel tradition could not be sung for a general audience, although an audience of re-enactors would understand the context of the work. Certain words to the songs in *The Beggar's Opera* are quite rough, and we considered long and hard before we decided to keep them in. Ultimately they were tamer than those in some modern rap music (for instance). Over time, we have come to the conclusion that if we cannot sing the words of the song unaltered, we do not sing the song at all. As such, we have never yet performed "Oh! Susanna" as the second verse is quite shocking, and we will not perform it without that verse.

Having determined the type of entertainment, the instruments that are appropriate, and the songs that fit, we then put together a script. Again, we research to find quotes and scripts from the period to be portrayed, making sure that the script works both for the modern and period audience, and that it does not put together elements that were not used in that time period. This, of course,



is the standard work of first person interpretation. For example, jokes that can be documented to 1870 cannot be used in an 1860s show; we must avoid modern references and slang, maintain a demeanor appropriate to the time, make sure the women play roles that are period appropriate, and so forth. *(Of course, it is always gratifying when one reference works for both the time period and the modern time. This is the case with "United States It Am the Place," an 1860s minstrel song that bemoans how high taxes are.)*

We then make all this fit for our available personnel. The event host in St. Charles for *The Beggar's Opera*, for instance, wanted six performers, so we had to make sure that we had the right people for the parts. At other times, as when we put on a variety show, we would then tweak the script to suit the talents of our performers. All this is, of course, standard for any form of entertainment.

One of the last (although not the least) considerations is the costuming. Once we know who is performing, we have to put together the costuming that fits the part and the time period as well as the performer. We also have to make sure that our sources are as authentic as our music. All our women wear period-appropriate corsets, and the outer garments are fitted to the undergarments. I find out the latest costume research in the era and go from there, and I am often sewing hems and buttonholes as we make our way to the performance, an experience shared by many!

These are the main thoughts and considerations that consume us as we prepare for a performance. Most are considerations that many site managers and researchers also go through when they put together programs and scenarios. We hope that what we have outlined here will help others to venture further into period-correct performances – and we are always available to consult if you want some help or some reassurance.

Phillipa and her husband Bill have been performing and researching historic music together for over twenty years. Some of their work includes nineteenth-century American brass bands, social orchestras, and minstrelsy; Renaissance and Medieval music (complete with hurdy-gurdies and shawms), and Classic Rock. In order to give their audiences the complete nineteenth-century entertainment package, they now tour as the Mockingbird Theatre Co. (mockingbirdtheatreco.com) complete with tent, seating, and theater wagon.

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A MOMENT IN TIME

Edited by
Dan Schoeneberg



1

2



3



1. The back mark of this circa 1880-1883 carte de visite reads "H.G. Smith, Studio Building, Boston." Handwritten identification on the back of the card corresponds with the numbering on front of image- 1. Comical Brown 2. Howard Buxton. "Comical" (William B.) Brown was a popular entertainer throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, and author of at least two song books including "That Comical Brown's Budget of Comical Songs, as Sung by Him in his Entertainments Throughout the Country" published in 1881, and "Comical (William B.) Brown's Songster" published in 1885. This image is a promotional image taken with Howard Buxton, presumably a fellow entertainer and orator. They both wear dark suits and bow ties, typical of the 1880s, while Howard wears a side parted hairdo and trimmed mustache, and holds a roll of paper, presumably a reference to his chosen vocation. A pinky ring is also visible. Howard is seated on a Renaissance Revival chair. "Comical" Brown sports side burns and a neatly combed and parted hairstyle. His white vest is just visible against a white shirt. His violin sports a chin rest, and judging from the wear on the body, is well used.

2. The backmark on this circa 1864-1868 carte de visite reads "H. Olsen, Photographer, 650 Washington St. Opposite Hall of Records. San Francisco." Beneath this

there reads a handwritten note "Percy Philip Smith aged 3 years." Percy is perched on an ottoman to make sure that he can lean against a Roccoco Revival oval table. He holds a diatonic harmonica quite protectively, perhaps as it is his favorite toy, or he's just nervous standing in front of the photographer. He wears a wool suit commonly found on boys his age. His gingham checked zouave jacket has a single button at the neck and dark piping at the cuffs and body. His pants also show matching dark piping. He wears a small plug porkpie hat. His lace-up boots appear to provide solid footing on the floral print ottoman.

3. This circa 1864-1868 carte de visite is probably a copy image of an earlier photograph, given the tonal ranges of the picture. The backmark reads "Chas. Homan, Photographer, 340 Chapel St. New Haven, Conn." Just exactly who or where "Shell Lake" is remains a mystery, however this grizzled gentleman holds his fiddle like he means business. The fiddle lacks a chin rest, as was common at the time the image was taken. The fellow wears a rubberized oilcloth wheel cap, worn at a jaunty angle. A scarf appears to be wrapped firmly around his neck, as if to keep himself warm from the elements. This would seem to indicate a musician's life spent outside. Given that the image was taken in New Haven Connecticut, just off the Long Island Sound, this is entirely feasible. In addition, he also wears a simple dark frock coat and trousers.



4



5

4. Carte de visite, circa late 1870s- early 1880s. The back mark reads P. Datesman, Photographer, Marshalltown, Iowa. This image taken in a town located about fifty miles northeast of Des Moines, Iowa shows a group posing proudly behind a studio backdrop. The bearded gentleman in the back sports a dark suit and wide dark tie, with the coat unbuttoned. His vest is only buttoned at the top and bottom, with watch chain and fob barely visible hanging from a pocket. His receding hairline is slightly unkempt, and combed back on top, and down at the sides.

The lady is dressed in a dark simple dress, with gathering and piping around the skirt. Her bodice sports a large bow. Her hair is parted in the middle with the back gathered in a bun, and held in place by a comb.

The teenaged fiddler on the left wears a wide lapelled dark coat and matching trousers, and a collarless vest as well as dark boots. He cradles his violin and bow in his lap. He may be new at playing the violin, as he has marked the positions on the neck of his fiddle to help him play the notes.

The other gentleman wears a dark suit and wide tie, with a visible tie pin. He also sports a clean white shirt, and slightly dingy boots that appear to be in need of a dressing. He holds his six string parlor guitar in the Spanish or Classical style. He is playing the guitar finger-style, using his thumb, and at least two fingers, without a pick, or plectrum. Each musician is seated on what appear to be plush Renaissance Revival, or Estlake chairs.

5. While there is no visible backmark on this circa 1860-1868 carte de visite, the striking family portrait shows a father with his children and his violin. His swept back hair, dark suit and checked pants are typical of the era, while his large fiddle lacks a chin rest as is often seen during this time. He also sports a sizeable beard and full moustache. He rests the instrument in an ungainly way against his chin, as if it is serving more as a photographers prop, than as a practiced instrument. His children are all dressed in the current fashion for boys and girls their age. The boy is dressed in a large wool suit with buttons piped diagonally down his chest, while two pockets are piped at the bottom of the coat. His matching pants cover his square toed boots which are firmly planted on the cross-hatched carpet. The boots appear to have scuff plates on the toes.

His younger sibling, who could be either a boy or girl given the age of the child, is wearing a cinch-waisted checked dress, with white stockings visible underneath, and lace up boots. The youngster's longer blond hair is pulled away from the face. The oldest sibling, a daughter, wears a dark dress, commonly found in the 1860s. Her skirt is piped around the hem, while her jacket is cut in the zouave style as was popular at the time. Her hair is neatly parted in the middle and cut short in back.



6

6. Carte-de-visite circa 1865-1870. The back mark reads "Newton and Keenan, Photographers." There is also a handwritten note that reads "J.L. Walker and friends he ran with when a young man. X is he." The blue "x" in this outdoor photograph denotes the person in question. This seated group of men demonstrates a variety of frock coats and sack coats, as well as a range of headgear, including pork pie hats, an early bowler style hat, and a wheelcap. The two seated musicians hold their fiddles low against their chests, as seen during the mid-nineteenth century. Four other men in the back row appear to be holding sprigs of flowers, or pine boughs, commemorating some unknown event or occasion.

7. Carte de visite- circa 1891-1899. The back mark reads "Established 15 years. W.H. Fawn, 31, Walworth Road. Near the Elephant Station." This backmark gives a more accurate date of this English photograph, as Elephant Station in London opened on December 18, 1890. This studio portrait shows a soprano saxhorn player in a military style band. His crisp uniform is trimmed with piping in front and on the cuffs of his jacket. He has what appears to be a sword belt around his waist, while his dark pants are plain. His cap is placed jauntily on his head, held firmly in place by a chin strap. He stands behind a stylized backdrop, and rests his left hand on a naturalistic table. He holds what appears to be either a B-flat or E-flat soprano saxhorn in his right hand.

"friends he ran with when a young man..."



7



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8. Cased tintype- circa late 1850s-early 1860s. This unidentified fiddler holds his instrument under his chin and proudly draws his bow across the strings in this ferrotype. The violin pushes a black cravat to the side, while his dark frock coat appears to be trimmed with velvet along the back of the lapel. He also sports a satin or silk vest. His hair is combed back and slightly unkempt. Note- the discoloration of the brass mat is from the scanning process.

11



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9. Carte de visite- circa 1870s. There is no back mark visible on this carte de visite, however a penciled note reads "Papa about 13 years old." The proud young teen poses in a fine sack suit with a fancy bowtie next to a renaissance revival chair. A watch chain can be seen tucked in his matching vest. He confidently and proudly holds his violin in one hand, while planting his bow firmly on the ground with the other.

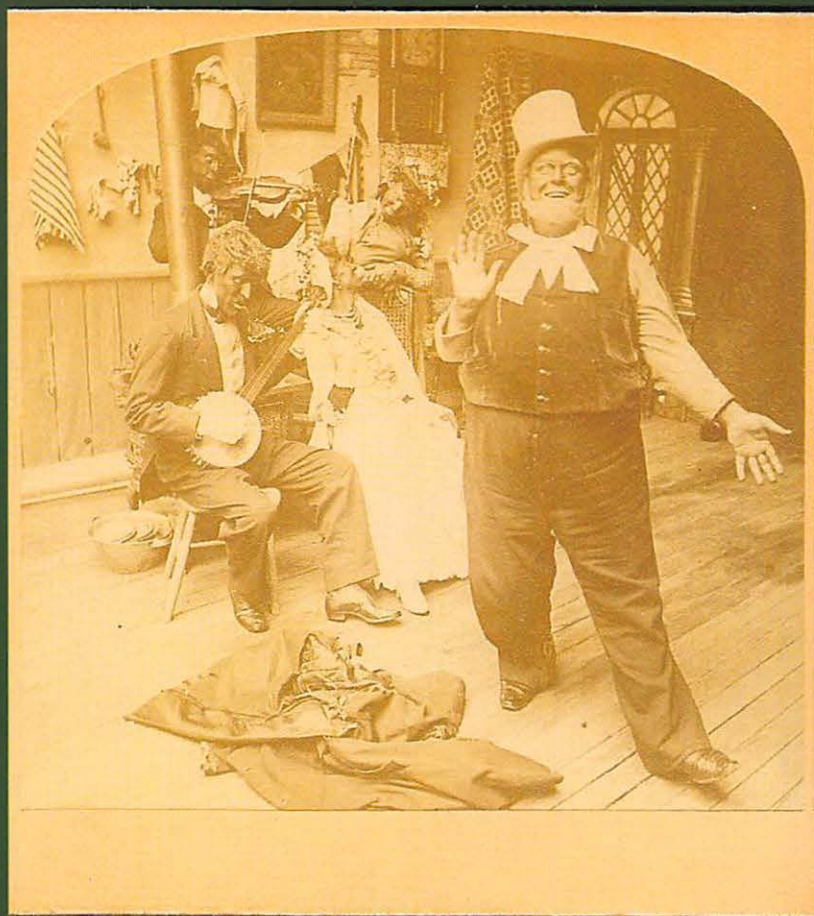
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10. Carte de Visite- This circa 1870s English photograph bears a back mark that reads "J. Hoare Photographer Fareham Hants." The location has been crossed out and handwritten underneath are the words "Botsworth Sussex" The gentleman on the right seated on what may be a cane bottomed chair, is posed in a dark suit, with lighter striped pants showing a stripe down the side. His opened sack coat reveals a nice shawl collared vest and white shirt. A watch chain is visible threaded through his vest. He holds a scroll of paper in his hand, as seen in earlier images. This is presumably a reference to public speaking, or entertaining. His lace-up boots appear to have the uppers folded down revealing lighter socks. His hairdo is slightly unkempt, and curly at both the crown of his head, and on the sides. His musician compatriot is seated on a rococo revival chair. He wears a dark suit, with his sack coat neatly trimmed and bound edged all the way around the collar, edges, and cuffs. His vest is neatly buttoned to cover a white shirt. His darker trousers are plain. He is holding his fiddle as if he means to play it for the photographer, bowing with his right hand while fingering the instrument with his left. Of additional interest is the rough plank board platform that they sit on is covered simply with a plain rough carpet.

11. Carte de Visite- This circa 1870s image contains a back mark that reads "J.B. Momeyer, Photographer. Locust Street, Near Depot. McKeesport, PA." These two young fellows pose seated on what appear to be plank bottomed chairs. They both wear simple dark suits with both of their sack coats worn open, while their shawl collared vests enclose around collarless shirts. The fellow on the right has neatly combed his hair, and wears lace up shoes, while his musician friend's longer haired locks are brushed to the side. He also wears lace up shoes. He holds his fiddle and bow upright, displaying both prominently and proudly.

12. This 1892-1893 stereoview image has a back mark that reads "Photographed and Published by B.W. Kilburn, Littleton, N.H." It also bears a front and side mark that reads "7409. Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay. Copyright 1892 by B.W. Kilburn." The photo shows black-faced minstrel actors performing the 1891 vaudeville tune Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay.



13. This English cabinet card circa 1880s-1890s bears the back mark "Patronized by their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales, The Duke and Duchess of Connaught. T. Nesbitt, Photographic Artist, Market Place, Opposite Mr. H. Durdens. Blandford." The outdoor image, perhaps taken on school grounds, shows a proud boys' marching band and their teachers. The boys appear in matching caps and uniforms, holding a variety of instruments, including clarinets, valve cornets, trombones, baritones, tubas, a snare drum, and a large bass drum. They all appear to be around the same age, with only a few older boys posing in the middle of the picture. Their teachers all sport facial hair of various descriptions, and are dressed appropriately for the occasion with high bowler hats, and a single well cared-for top hat.

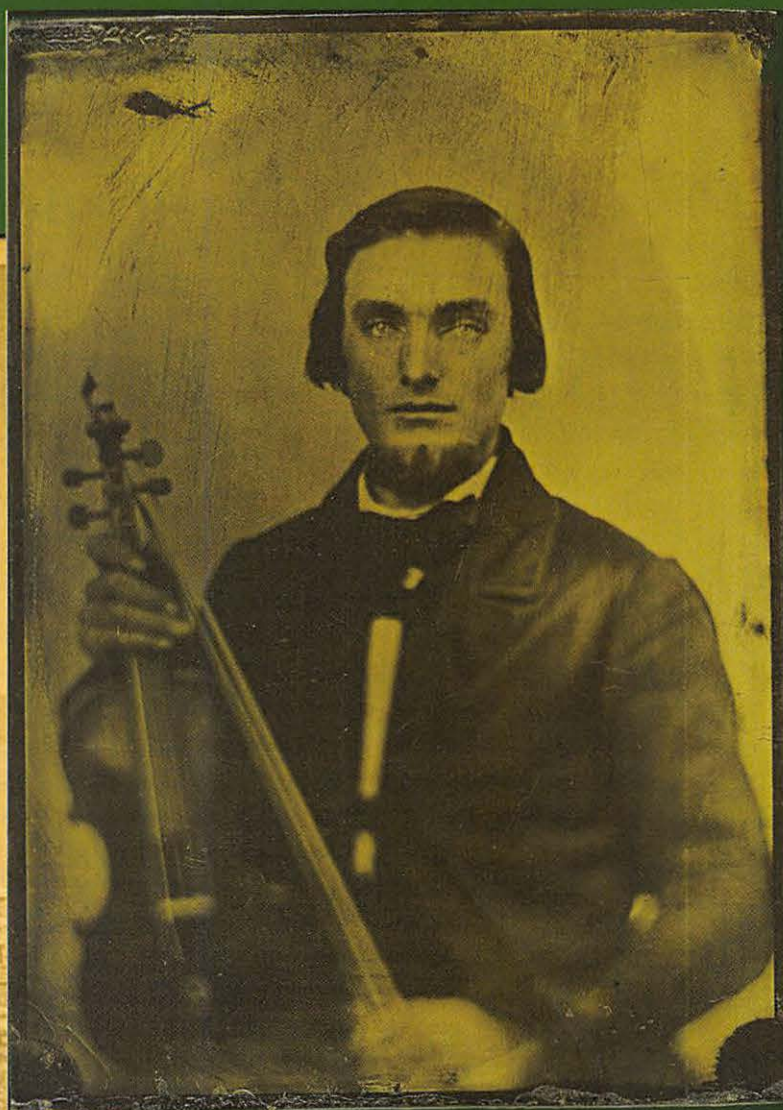
14. This circa-1880s cabinet card from "P.S. Rider, Syracuse, N.Y." shows a theatrical image of a musician and a young girl. They are posed in what are almost certainly their costumes from a play, with the girl wearing a knee length dress, broad brimmed hat, stockings, and side button boots. The girl clutches her older companion, and gazes up at him. Her musician guardian smiles into the camera lens. He wears a long coat, stocking cap with tassel, dark trousers, side-buttoned gaiters, and leather shoes. A multi-colored handkerchief can be seen sticking out of his right front pocket. His parlor-sized six-string guitar has a slotted headstock, and is being played finger style, with his thumb and forefinger. It appears that he is fingering an E chord. The two actors are standing in front

13



of a naturalistic studio backdrop, perhaps reminiscent of the unknown play that they appeared in.

15. This 5" x 7" "full-plate" tintype appears to be a copy image of an earlier ambrotype or tintype. The original photo dates from 1850s, while the copy image was done at a later date. The unidentified image, taken by an unknown photographer, shows a single man dressed in a frock coat. The image is a little fuzzy, however it appears that he is wearing a vest, white shirt, and dark tie. His hair is neatly combed to the side, and down. He holds his fiddle and bow proudly, although he moved his bowing hand slightly while the image was taken. Additionally the image may be partially out of focus due to the copying process.



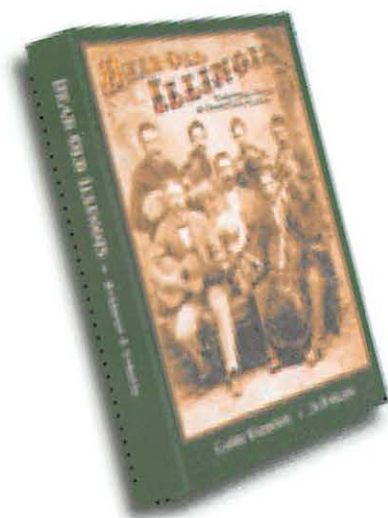
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MUSIC REVIEW

BY DEBRA REID,
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

DEAR OLD ILLINOIS: TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS



I strongly suggest that anyone working in historic sites and open air museums with an interest in music interpretation acquire *Dear Old Illinois*, both the book and the three CD set that accompanies it. Yes, the music focuses on downstate Illinois, just as the title indicates, but much of the folk music originated elsewhere, came to the area via the voice boxes and fiddles of migrants, and passed on to myriad places beyond Illinois. Thus, the book can inform programming beyond “downstate.”

Dear Old Illinois resulted from conscientious efforts of two folk music enthusiasts. David S. McIntosh, a native of Southern Illinois and a music professor at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, collected traditional music for nearly 25, between 1932 and 1956, often with help provided by his students. This collection of audio recordings and oral interviews was eventually given to Indiana University’s Archive of Traditional Music. Garry Harrison, a native of central Illinois, documented elderly fiddlers in the Charleston, Illinois, area, and beyond, between the 1970s and 1990s, aided during the 1970s by a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Harrison relocated to Bloomington during the mid-1990s. *Dear Old Illinois* contains 750 songs and tunes they documented.

The editors, Harrison and Jo Burgess, director of the Wylie House Museum and Associate Librarian, Indiana University Libraries, organized the material into two major categories:

songs for unaccompanied singers, which include transcriptions of lyrics and music scores; and fiddle tunes, which include hoedowns, waltzes, schottisches, and jigs with music scores. The editors use “tune” and “song” self consciously. They use “tune” to mean a piece of instrumental music or music to which lyrics were set while they use “song” to mean a piece of vocal music that had both a tune and

lyrics (xii). With preliminary information out of the way, readers can then immerse themselves in 401 pages with most pages devoted to one tune or song. For songs, each entry includes lyrics, a score with key signatures (even though traditional musicians did not specify key), chord notations, and sometimes photographs of informants. The book concludes with background information on the songs and fiddle tunes, provenance of each as collected by McIntosh and Harrison, and a thorough cross-referenced index.

A three-CD set, available for separate purchase, allows traditionalist to learn the tunes by ear, rather than by reading and memorizing the

Edited by Garry Harrison and Jo Burgess. Bloomington, Indiana: Pick Away Press, 2007. Book: \$39.95; CD set: \$24.95; Book and CD set: \$64.90, plus tax if appropriate, and shipping. Consult the website: www.dearoldillinois.com/order/html or contact the press directly: Pick Away Press, PO Box 7102, Bloomington, IN 47407

music. Altogether, the 506-page *Dear Old Illinois* and the three-CD set is a must-have for traditional musicians, particularly for anyone involved in music programming at historic sites and open air museums in the Midwest.

To see for yourself, consult the homepage for the book and CD package at www.dearoldillinois.com. The page includes background information on the collectors and their efforts to document Illinois folk music between the 1930s and the 1990s. It includes excerpts from original tunes as performed by the informants for the collectors. It includes historic context for each song, i.e. McIntosh collected a song around 1950 that was really a version of “In

Dear Old Illinois,” written by Terre Haute, Indiana native Paul Dresser and published in 1902. According to the website, Harrison and Burgess agreed that the tune should be included because it represents a traditional musician’s interpretation of published music. The song, titled “Dear Old Illinois” in the collection, appears as song number 61, on page 43 in *Dear Old Illinois*.

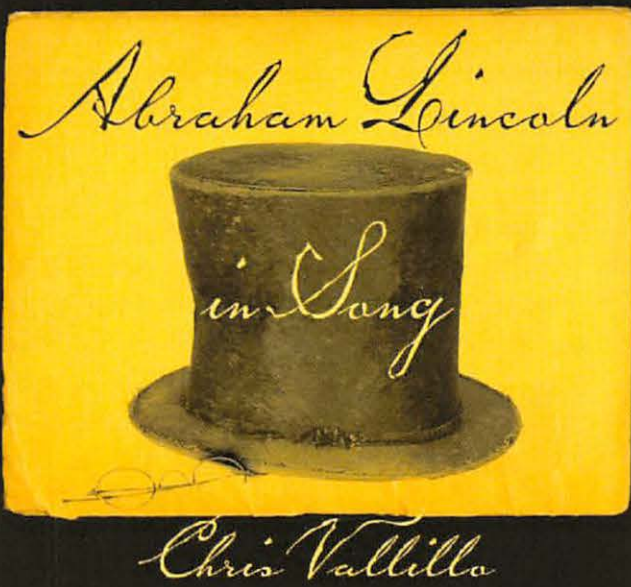
Readers should be aware that retrieving data from such an extensive resource requires a bit of a learning curve. The editors have made it as painless as possible. An alphabetized list of song and tune titles appears at the beginning of the book. The number of song derives from its alphabetized order:

songs from 1 through 361, fiddle tunes from 1 through 391. You can browse this list for pithy titles that you have likely never heard before, i.e. the song “Root Hog or Die,” or the fiddle tune, “Ikum Got a Coon Treed,” or for classics such as the song, “Old Rosin the Beau,” or the fiddle tune, “Cotton-Eyed Joe.” Agricultural topics abound, i.e., “Barnyard Song,” “The Farmer’s Cursed Wife,” or “Rabbit in the Fodder Shock,” outnumbered by tales of natural disaster, love lost, and reputations ruined. Better yet, just start flipping pages. It will take a lifetime to relish this rich resource, just as it reflects several lifetimes of traditional music making. Enjoy!

In Their Own Words....:

43.17	Law. J. H. W. H. H.	1	Missouri	England	Wales	England
—	Oliver H. F. 34	Wife	Missouri	England	England	England
—	Charles H. H. 18	Son	W. School	Missouri	England	England
—	Frank H. H. 13	Son	W. School	Missouri	England	England
—	William H. H. 7	Son	W. School	Illinois	England	England
—	Rich'd H. H. 6	Son	At Home	Illinois	England	England

F. W. Lewis, a musician by occupation, was born in England but spent enough time in Illinois to have a son, and perhaps partake of the Illinois music scene during the years after the Civil War. The 1880 Population Census indicates his residency in Jefferson Barracks, just south of St. Louis, Missouri. Source: St. Louis County, Missouri Population Census, 1880, pg. 17. Listings for soldiers, officers and keepers of the U.S. Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks, see pgs. 17, 18 and 19. Ancestry.com, accessed May 15, 2009.



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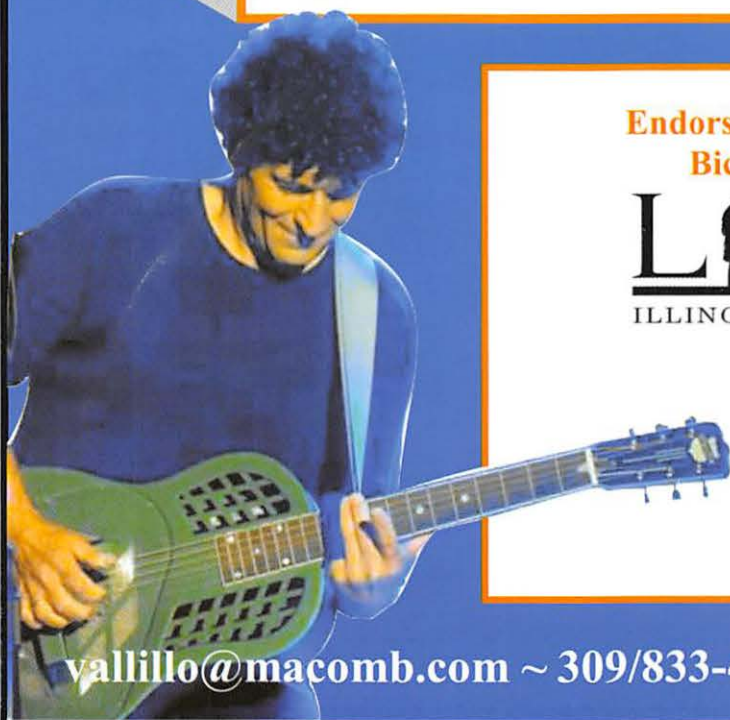
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--Rick Kogan, *The Sunday Papers*, WGN Radio

Book the show!

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come alive with his excellent blending of music and storytelling."

--Phil Funkenbusch, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum



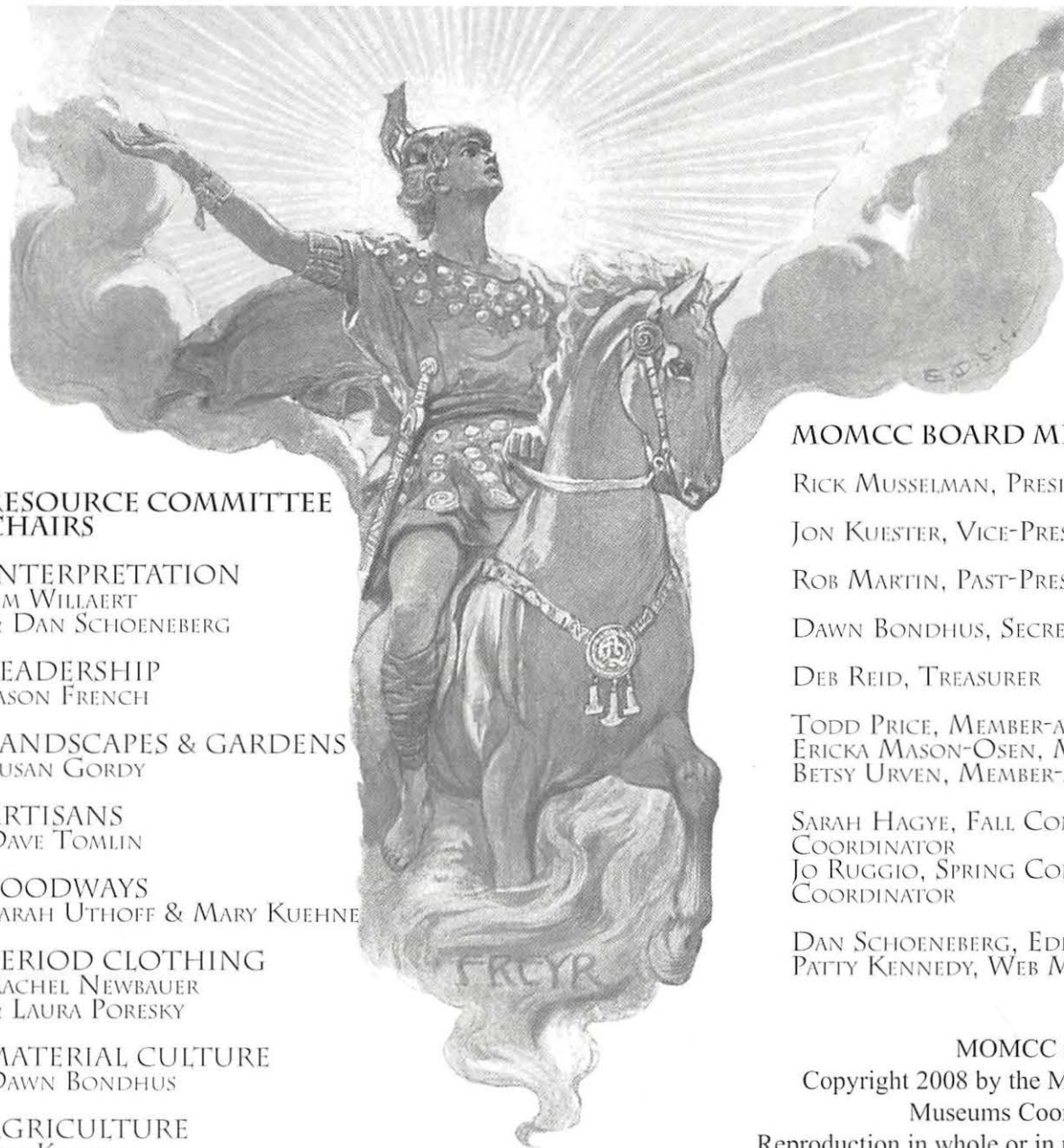
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